IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

IN RE: Case No. 22-19361-MBK

(Jointly Administered)

BLOCKFI INC., et al.,

Debtors.

September 20, 2023

10:02 a.m.

TRANSCRIPT OF STATUS CONFERENCE REGARDING FTX AND THREE ARROWS BEFORE THE HONORABLE MICHAEL B. KAPLAN UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT CHIEF JUDGE

## APPEARANCES:

For the Debtors and Haynes and Boone, LLP Debtors-in-Possession: By: RICHARD KANOWITZ, ESQ.

30 Rockefeller Plaza, 26th Floor

New York, NY 10112

For the Foreign Representatives of Three Arrows Capital:

Latham & Watkins LLP By: ADAM GOLDBERG, ESQ. BRETT M. NEVE, ESQ.

1271 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10020

For FTX Trading LTD Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

and Affiliated Debtors: By: BRIAN D. GLUECKSTEIN, ESQ.

125 Broad Street New York, NY 10004

Audio Operator: Kiya Martin

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> J&J COURT TRANSCRIBERS, INC. 268 Evergreen Avenue Hamilton, New Jersey 08619 E-mail: jjcourt@jjcourt.com

(609) 586-2311 Fax No. (609) 587-3599

APPEARANCES (Cont'd):

For the U.S. Trustee:

Office of the U.S. Trustee By: JEFFREY M. SPONDER, ESQ. One Newark Center, Suite 2100

Newark, NJ 07102

For the Official

Committee of Unsecured By: KENNETH AULET, ESQ.

Creditors:

Brown Rudnick, LLP

7 Times Square

New York, NY 10036

Genova Burns LLC

By: DANIEL M. STOLZ, ESQ. 110 Allen Road, Suite 304 Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

## TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES:

For the Foreign

Latham & Watkins LLP

Representatives of By: NIMA H. MOHEBBI, ESQ.
Three Arrows Capital: 355 S. Grand Avenue, Suite 100

Los Angeles, CA 90071

For the Debtors and Debtors-in-Possession: Haynes and Boone LLP By: AIMEE FURNESS, ESQ.

2801 N. Harwood Street, Suite 2300

Dallas, TX 75201

For Prime Block Operations LLC:

Goldstein & McClintock LLLP By: DANIEL C. CURTH, ESQ.

111 Washington Street, Suite 1221

Chicago, IL 60602

Law Offices of Douglas T. Tabachnik,

By: DOUGLAS T. TABACHNIK, ESQ. 63 West Main Street, Suite C

Freehold, NJ 07728

For the Official Committee of Unsecured By: BENNETT S. SILVERBERG, ESQ. Creditors:

Brown Rudnick LLP

7 Times Square

New York, NY 10036

McCarter & English, LLP By: DAVID J. ADLER, ESQ.

Four Gateway Center 100 Mulberry Street Newark, NJ 07102

WWW.JJCOURT.COM

2

TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES (Cont'd):

For Elise S. Frejka: Traurig Law LLC

By: JEFFREY M. TRAURIG, ESQ. One University Plaza, Suite 124

3

Hackensack, NJ 07601

For Emergent Fidelity Morgan Lewis

Technologies Ltd.: By: JOSHUA DORCHAK, ESQ.

101 Park Avenue

New York, NY 10178

- - -

WWW.JJCOURT.COM

THE COURT: Good morning, everyone. This is Judge 1 2 Kaplan and we are addressing today's calendar with the BlockFi 3 matters. I'm hearing a little feedback. Just bear with us 4 while we test. 5 (Court/clerk discussion) I assume, all on remote, can you all hear me? I see 6 nodding heads. 8 UNIDENTIFIED ATTORNEY: We can hear you fine, Your 9 Honor. 10 (Court/clerk discussion) 11 THE COURT: All right, yes, much better. This what 12 $\parallel$  we face with these days. Good morning, counsel. So I have 13 counsel who are here in court as well as counsel appearing 14 remotely. 15 Let me just have an appearance on behalf of the 16 debtor. 17 MR. KANOWITZ: Good morning, Your Honor. May it please the Court? Richard Kanowitz of Haynes and Boone on 19 $\parallel$  behalf of the debtors and debtors-in-possession, BlockFi. 2.0 THE COURT: Thank you. On behalf of the Committee? 22 MR. AULET: Good morning, Your Honor. Kenneth Aulet 23 of Brown Rudnick for the Committee. 24 MR. STOLZ: Good morning, Your Honor. Daniel Stolz

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25 of Genova Burns on behalf of the Committee.

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MR. TRAURIG: Good morning, Your Honor. Jeff Traurig
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   on behalf of Elise Frejka, the fee examiner.
             THE COURT: And I see Ms. Frejka. Good morning.
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             MS. FREJKA: Good morning, Your Honor.
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             MR. MOHEBBI: Good morning, Your Honor. Nima Mohebbi
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   on behalf of the Joint Liquidators of Three Arrows Capital.
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             THE COURT: Great. Thank you.
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             MR. ADLER: Good morning, Your Honor. David Adler
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  from McCarter & English, efficiency counsel to the Committee.
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             THE COURT: Good morning, Mr. Adler.
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             MR. ADLER: Good morning.
             MS. FURNESS: Good morning, Your Honor.
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             THE COURT: Anyone else? There we go.
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             MS. FURNESS: Aimee Furness from Haynes and Boone
15 here on behalf of the debtors and debtors-in-possession.
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             THE COURT: All right, thank you.
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             MR. DORCHAK: Your Honor, good morning. Joshua
   Dorchak of Morgan Lewis on behalf of Emergent Fidelity
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   Technologies Ltd.
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             THE COURT: Good morning.
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             And all right, so, counsel, Mr. Kanowitz --
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             MR. KANOWITZ: Yes, Your Honor.
             THE COURT: -- what would you like to start with?
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             MR. KANOWITZ: Well, good news. This should be
25∥ relatively straightforward hearing nothing contested. This is
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1 truly a status conference on four matters regarding FTX and 2 Three Arrows that are on the docket. You have the claim  $3\parallel$  objection against Three Arrows at 1375, the estimation motion at 1346 and as to the FTX debtors' claim objections, 1376, and 5 estimation motion 1347. We thought we'd take the opportunity to have a status conference, Your Honor, before we maybe launch into war so here we are. But there's going to be no argument today. Today is really to answer any questions you have as you saw a flurry of documents being filed --

> THE COURT: Right.

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MR. KANOWITZ: -- and to really map out for you in general terms, again, nothing is hard and fast and I'll explain as I go along, of where the debtors or the estate see us going over the next, you know, few weeks, few months. Confirmation is right around the corner and these issues that arise today in connection with estimation and the claim objections tangentially relate to those issues but do not stop confirmation, right? We were talking about estimation for distribution purposes only in connection with our estimation motion and claim objections which deal with the amount allowed, if any, and the distribution under a plan that gets confirmed.

So, again, no oral argument today but I thought it was really important to get in front of Your Honor before we go all out against one another.

THE COURT: Well, I appreciate that. It always helps

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1 and I enjoy not having argument. We save that for I think for 2 tomorrow. Before we go into the status conferences and since 3 we have the fee examiner and her counsel on, why don't we address -- and it's always nicer to talk about fees, right, first?

MR. KANOWITZ: As long as they're approved.

THE COURT: So, let me turn to what's on my calendar 8 as Numbers 7 and 8 but it's the uncontested matters going forward, the fee examiner's final report regarding first interim fee applications for both debtors' counsel and Committee counsel. Let me turn to the fee examiner and/or her counsel.

MS. FREJKA: Good morning, Your Honor. Elise Frejka. I'm the fee examiner appointed in this case. I think this will 15 be very brief. There are two final reports filed at Docket Numbers 1464 and 1465. They're separated by representation. Ι spent extensive amount of time both reviewing the fees and discussing work streams and staffing and time keeping with all the professionals. After that extensive review, we engaged in negotiations and the proposed order that was filed as an exhibit to both of the final reports reflect those agreements. I can say after looking at the time entries extensively that the work performed and the descriptions provided align nicely and I recommended allowance as recommended in the two final reports.

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THE COURT: And thank you, Mr. Traurig, as well.

with, of course, the estate parties, the Committee as well will

25 make a proposal.

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If the parties cannot agree on the process as well as 2 the schedule, we're going to come before Your Honor on the 10th in written form and ask Your Honor to rule. These issues are very important to the estate, both estimation and claim objection, and we're going to put our energy towards that to try to see what can we get them consensually and what issues need Your Honor's attention if we can. So that's what I anticipate between now and the 10th.

There will be another filing by the estate concerning, again, process and scheduling. Even if we make a deal on process and scheduling, we're still going to put something before Your Honor so you could really give us your own input about how to move forward with these significant matters in the estate.

The fact is, Your Honor, since we filed our 16 estimation motion and claim objection, there has been discussion between the parties and, in fact, Three Arrows came forth with a number. We don't agree with it. They amended their claim which will give rise to another claim objection. But at least we're talking, we're getting somewhere, there's been movement. Likewise, FTX, a lot of discussion, a lot of They came down from several billion-dollar claims to I believe now is \$488 million claim for purposes of estimation.

So, again, moving forward, not there yet, but we're looking forward to having, again, productive discussions about

 $1 \parallel$  how do we resolve it or how do we move forward.

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Also, in the interim Three Arrows filed a motion to lift stay. It's returnable on the 10th. We will be opposing that as well. That must also get put into the fold.  $5 \parallel \text{you're going to have additional pleadings, i.e., the objection}$ to the amended Three Arrows claim on a whole host of defenses and reasons as well as opposition to the lift stay. So, all of 8∥ that ball of wax will be put in front of Your Honor either, you 9 know, to approve or to sort out on the 10th, at least that's 10 the goal at this point in time.

There were some concerns raised by parties outside of the claimants, to wit, the Emergent debtors and I made it clear in an e-mail to them and I'll make it clear on the record, we are not seeking to have a determination about what has been 15 preserved, reserved concerning the emergent pledge and the Robinhood shares. That is clearly embodied in the stipulation that Your Honor approved, that Judge Dorsey approved, that the Government is aware of, that the Government has been working with the estate, you know, on those issues.

So, we're not going to use estimation motions or the claim objections to deal with the emergent pledge. It's just that simple. And, in fact, on estimation where we're seeking estimation for distribution purposes, a lien challenge which is what Emergent potentially has is not even relevant. So, we couldn't ask Your Honor to make a determination on a lien

challenge for distribution purposes, especially where we do not have the collateral asset.

Rather, the Government seized it. And on that, Your Honor, I think you might have seen in the news, which is good for all parties who claim to have an interest, the Government was able to do a buyback with Robinhood and now there are \$605 million there subject to everybody's rights to assert priority or some other type of interest in that.

THE COURT: Nice little bump up.

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MR. KANOWITZ: It's something to look forward to in terms of creditor distributions in or more cases. So that's really where we're at. I don't have many more comments. If Your Honor would have any questions, happy to answer or cede the podium to anybody who would like to speak on these issues but really, it's to table everything, see what we could work out consensually. If not, we'll be back in front of Your Honor on the 10th for some guidance.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kanowitz. And I certainly will hear from any and all counsel.

Two things of concern, and I'm pleased to hear that the parties are speaking and trying to work out a sensible approach to resolving the issues or if not, at least narrowing the issues for the Court to resolve. The question I have is, is it envisioned, and this will be addressed by other counsel as well, that these disputes will have an impact on the plan

1 confirmation hearing going forward?

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MR. KANOWITZ: On ours? No. I think I remarked at 3 the beginning they're related because clearly when we're asking for estimation for a distribution purpose, it's related to the  $5 \parallel \text{plan}$ , but that presupposes a confirmed plan. So none of the issues that arise from these claim objections or estimation are a block to confirmation. There are other objections that have been raised --

> THE COURT: Right.

MR. KANOWITZ: -- that we'll deal with in due course next week but nothing as it rises from these pleadings.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. KANOWITZ: At least that's my view.

THE COURT: And from the limited amount I've read, 15∥ because you all have been working on it and I just see what gets filed and try to glean the import of it, what I'm able to glean is part of this an issue as to which Court is going to be addressing some of these issues, whether it's going to be Judge Dorsey or I?

2.0 MR. KANOWITZ: There are multiple jurisdiction and venue issues. 21

THE COURT: Or maybe even another Court?

MR. KANOWITZ: Yes, Your Honor, those issues have been raised and will be raised.

THE COURT: Okay. I will urge the parties -- I think

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Let me turn to other counsel.

MR. GOLDBERG: Good morning, Your Honor. For the 25∥ record, Adam Goldberg of Latham & Watkins on behalf of the

1 joint liquidators of Three Arrows. Before addressing the  $2 \parallel$  issues of the status conference, if Your Honor would permit it, I'd just like to take a minute or two to give you the Three Arrows story on our first appearance before you today.

THE COURT: Absolutely.

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MR. GOLDBERG: Thank you. Our case also presents a dueling debtor case and so a little background may be helpful. But before I get into that, I would also like to mention for the Court's benefit, we are in the process of retaining local counsel here in New Jersey and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you in person today with that in process.

> THE COURT: That's great. Thank you.

MR. AULET: Thank you, Your Honor. So, Three Arrows Capital, it was an investment firm organized in the British 15∥ Virgin Islands to be the eye focused on crypto currency trading. It incurred billions of dollars of loans from a whole host of parties. One of the lenders to Three Arrows was That trading strategy began to unravel and collapsed over the course of 2022 culminating in the BVI liquidation proceeding that was filed on June 27th, 2022. That case has now been recognized as a foreign main proceeding in the Southern District of New York before Judge Martin Klein.

One of the key issues that has been facing our liquidation proceeding has been that the founders of Three Arrows essentially disappeared upon the filing of the

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 $1 \parallel$  liquidation and while they reappeared in the public sphere for 2 their own parochial purposes, they have refused to cooperate  $3\parallel$  with the liquidation and have completely resisted discovery demands through a whole number of courts there in which we're 5 trying to pursue them.

As a result, the Three Arrows liquidators have been scrambling from the get go to identify and preserve assets that are very easily movable to liquidate and realize the value of those assets in a highly volatile environment and really completely rebuild from the ground up the books and records of Three Arrows.

In that context, Your Honor, we've been engaged in a discovery process involving dozens and dozens of parties to attempt to rebuild those books and records and that effort has then been ongoing with the debtors. We've been issuing discovery requests and working with them behind the scenes for a little over two months now. That process has enabled us to now begin pursuing avoidance actions under BVI law and we are earnestly pursuing those actions against the debtors here as well as against other Chapter 11 debtors, namely, Genesis Global which is in Chapter 11 in the SDNY, against FTX as well as Celsius and a number of other parties which actually are not 23 $\parallel$  in Chapter 11.

As part of that effort and to provide additional 25 $\parallel$  clarity on the claims before this Court, we filed an amended  $1 \parallel \text{proof of claim}$  that sets out the detail of our claims that was 2 filed on September 13th and it reflects a headline claim amount 3 of approximately \$283 million.

So, our claim in this case is, from our perspective, one that involves common issues across an array of cases as the debtors' counsel mentioned and that is why we filed our motion for relief from the stay that's before the Court on October 10th. And in the meantime, Your Honor, I should also mention 9 we have a motion for relief from stay pending in the Genesis global Chapter 11 case that is currently scheduled to be heard next week on September 26th as well.

So, that's our brief introduction for --

THE COURT: Who's hearing the Genesis case?

MR. AULET: That's Judge Sean Lane, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay.

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So that's the context for our case and MR. AULET: appreciate Mr. Kanowitz' remarks. I think I largely agree with what he has framed. We look forward to working on how we can frame and perhaps even resolve these issues before the hearings and we'll be working earnestly to do that.

> THE COURT: I appreciate the background. Thank you.

MR. AULET: Thank you, Your Honor.

Sounds like all the judges should get THE COURT: together at the NCBJ and just, you know, try to bring order to 25 this.

Thank you, Your Honor. MR. GLUECKSTEIN: Good 2 morning again. Brian Glueckstein, Sullivan & Cromwell, for the 3 FTX debtors.

All right, I do echo Mr. Kanowitz' comments. We are 5 talking to the debtors about potential paths forward. As far as both process, Your Honor hit the nail on the head. There are very important venue questions here from our perspective in these multi-debtor issue cases. We clearly understand and 9 believe we have an obligation as BlockFi debtors do to try to 10 cut through those issues --

> THE COURT: Right.

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MR. GLUECKSTEIN: -- so that Your Honor does not have to adjudicate them and be put in that position.

We have filed timely claims. We believe they're significant claims. We understand the estate has a different view. As we did say in our preliminary response to the motion filed before today, we have been working with our FAs, obtaining additional information, talking to the BlockFi debtors about the size of our preference claims into the estates here.

Mr. Kanowitz is correct. We have suggested that the 22∥ totality of those claims for reserved purposes could be as low 23 das around \$488 million which obviously is significantly reduced from the claims we filed now that we have additional information. We do have questions and there will be issues,

1 not before Your Honor today, about whether estimation is 2 appropriate in that context with the size of that claim,  $3\parallel$  whether the debtor can satisfy its burden under Section 502(c) that undue delay would be incurred if we need to estimate these 5 claims.

They have, of course, filed a substantive claim objection to our claims. They have filed significant claims  $8\parallel$  into the FTX Estates, a billion dollars worth of claims. 9 think at this point there's general agreement that the 10 magnitude of the BlockFi claims into our estate are larger than the size of our claims into the estate here. And so that raises all sorts of issues when we have preference claims going effectively --

> THE COURT: Sure.

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MR. GLUECKSTEIN: -- and other claims going in both 16 directions.

As I said, Your Honor, you know, we do believe that the complicated questions around both venue and sequencing, how to adjudicate to the extent necessary the substantive issues are very complex and we continue to have discussions with BlockFi debtors' counsel about how to resolve them and paths forward that would either set reserves or in the context of 23 potentially resolving some of these venue questions, perhaps even obviate the need.

We will certainly over the next couple of weeks

confer in addition to those discussions with the debtors on 2 process and schedule to the extent that one or both of the  $3 \parallel$  substantive motions need to proceed in short order and we look forward to trying to, you know, narrow the issues at least as much as possible between now and October 10th. Thank you, Your Honor.

> THE COURT: Great. Mr. Glueckstein, thank you.

MR. GLUECKSTEIN: Thank you.

THE COURT: Anyone else in court?

(No audible response)

THE COURT: Let me turn to any counsel appearing remotely if they wish to be heard.

Mr. Dorchak?

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MR. DORCHAK: Your Honor, if I may? Thank you. 15∥ Joshua Dorchak from Morgan Lewis again on behalf of Emergent  $16\parallel$  Fidelity Technologies. Just quickly to explain our objection, Your Honor, I was pleased to hear Mr. Kanowitz say on the record that the debtors aren't going to ask Your Honor to just make any determinations that would be contrary to the stipulation and order (indiscernible) and stay the litigation over the Robinhood assets.

But just to be clear, the papers that were filed, the 23 motion to estimate and the objection, did do that. 24 stipulation orders say thou shalt not litigate ownership of the shares. The papers filed by BlockFi are to estimate at zero on

1 the principle that BlockFi was the sole owner of the shares. 2 The stipulation and order say thou shall not litigate the issue  $3 \parallel$  of liens over the Robinhood assets. The papers filed by BlockFi said, Judge, estimate the claims at zero and deny the 5 fraudulent transfer claims coming in because BlockFi hasn't filed a lien on the Robinhood assets.

So, we had reason to object. If there's not going to  $8 \parallel$  be a determination on those subjects, glad to hear it, but I hope you, Your Honor, and the rest of the persons in the courtroom understand that the objection that we filed had (indiscernible).

THE COURT: Sure. No, I appreciate it and I understand all the parties here are doing what they can to preserve their rights and try to reach a pathway to resolving some of the issues.

Anyone else wish to be heard?

Mr. Curth?

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MS. CURTH: Your Honor, on behalf of Prime Block Operations, we are here for a continued initial status conference. We have been in discussion for resolution of an adversary claim with BlockFi. We've made a settlement offer. They have asked for additional materials to review it and respond to it. We've provided that. In the interim we sort of ran out of time so we filed our motion to dismiss and compel arbitration.

THE COURT: Right.

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And there's a hearing date I believe of MS. CURTH:  $3 \parallel \text{October 10th for that.} \quad \text{We don't know if we might be seeking to}$ continue that if settlement discussions continue to be 5 fruitful, but right now we have those dates and I don't know if there's anything else to report to the Court at this point given that if our motion is successful, this won't be heard before Your Honor (indiscernible).

THE COURT: I'm cognizant of the pending motion. 10 Needless to say, I urge the parties to keep discussions going forward. As always, I offer the Court's assistance where I can. I get myself in trouble when I do that because I run out of time keeping all the balls in the air. But if I can, I certainly will assist. Otherwise, we're just moving -- going to move the pretrial to that date and keep everything for calendar purposes and see where you all go.

MS. CURTH: Sounds good, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right, thank you.

MS. CURTH: Thank you, Your Honor.

All right, then I think we've exhausted 2.0 THE COURT: I don't have any additional questions. 21 the matters.

Mr. Sponder for the U.S. Trustee, did you have 23 anything you wish to weigh in on?

MR. SPONDER: As always, thank you, Your Honor. Sponder from the Office of the U.S. Trustee. Nothing today.

24 1 Thank you. 2 THE COURT: Okay, thanks. 3 All right then I will say it somewhat tongue in cheek  $4 \parallel I$  look forward to seeing you all again, some tomorrow maybe, 5 others next week. So, thank you. We are adjourned. 6 6 <u>CERTIFICATION</u> 7 I, MARY POLITO, court approved transcriber, certify 8 that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the official 9 electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-10 entitled matter and to the best of my ability. 11 12 13 /s/ Mary Polito 14 MARY POLITO 15 J&J COURT TRANSCRIBERS, INC. DATE: September 21, 2023 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25